

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

For Gerald Eve LLP
in respect of

Land at Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield

July 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planit-IE Ltd have been appointed by Gerald Eve LLP to carry out a landscape and visual appraisal of the Land off Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield. Planit-IE Ltd are a registered practice of the Landscape Institute and have considerable experience in all areas of landscape design and visual assessment.
- 1.2 The outline application relates to land which conjoins the settlement of Huddersfield between Crosland Hill and Crosland Moor edge, located to the south-west of the urban area, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. Refer to Figure 1 for site location.
- 1.3 Landscape and visual matters are also considered in relation to the site's location within Local Character Profile area LCA E1: Holmfirth – Meltham and is bounded to the northern edge by LCA F4 Colne [Slaithwaite, Marsden] and is in the National Character Area Profile No. 37 - Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe.
- 1.4 This report does not constitute a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 1.5 The report includes visual montages photographed in February 2018. An assessment of the change in the landscape since this date concluded that very little change had occurred within the landscape and townscape, as captured within the agreed views, since this date, and therefore these photographs and montages could be utilised to assess impacts with a high degree of confidence.

Site Description

- 1.6 The site measures approximately 41.5 hectares (ha) in total. This application site itself is 29.3 ha, with a further 12.2 ha of land within the applicants wider land ownership. The site is bound by open fields to the north, residential dwellings associated with Crosland Hill to the east, Blackmoorfoot Road to the south and Felks Stile Road to the west. A Site Location Plan is attached at **Appendix 1**, which illustrates the extent and location of both the proposed application site (red line) and the Applicant's wider land ownership (blue line).
- 1.7 The site is considered to comprise three distinct areas and detail on each is set out below.
- 1.8 The first area comprises the existing Black Cat Fireworks compound, which measures approximately 17 ha. This area contains an industrial firework storage and distribution compound (currently used by Black Cat Fireworks Ltd), grass and scrub land, with a varied mixture of office buildings, sheds, reinforced storage buildings and shipping containers (making a total of 43 buildings/containers) linked by several access roads and parking/storage bays.
- 1.9 The second main area comprises agricultural fields to the west of the fireworks site. This area consists of managed grassland and some in-bye fields used mainly for grazing, hay or silage. The land is not classified as the 'best and most versatile land', with it being Grade 4 (as defined by Natural England's Regional Agricultural Land Classification [2010]). This part of the site also contains tree preservation orders on

individual trees located close to the south and south western boundaries (TPO IDs: 32/90/T1, 32/90/T2, 30/92/T3 and 30/92/T4).

- 1.10 Finally, the third area of the site is located to the east, situated between the site's existing factory compound and residential dwellings of Crosland Hill to the east. The area comprises a mix of managed grassland associated with the fireworks factory and small-scale agricultural fields used for grazing.
- 1.11 The surrounding area comprises: woodland and agricultural fields to the north, beyond which lies the village of Cowlersley within the Colne Valley; the village of Crosland Hill is situated to the east; a natural stone quarry, a public house and Crosland Moor Airfield are situated on the opposite side of Blackmoorfoot Road to the south; and Crosland Heath Golf Club is located immediately to the west of the site.
- 1.12 Due to natural gradients, old quarry sites and man-made platforms as part of the Black Cat Fireworks storage and distribution compound, the site has an elevated nature and a variable topography. As a general guide, there is a fall in levels of approximately 50 metres from west to east across the site, with less variation in levels from north to south.
- 1.13 The site is not situated within an area at risk of flooding, with the whole site being located within Flood Zone 1. There are no watercourses or ponds situated on or within close proximity to the site.
- 1.14 The site also does not contain any designated heritage assets (e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, and Historic Battlefields) but the eastern edge of the site is within the setting of five listed buildings (ranging from Grade II* to Grade II).
- 1.15 The site abuts a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpaths. Two are accessed via Felks Stile Road to the west (ref. HUD/234/30 and HUD/234/40). These subsequently merge with PRoW ref. HUD/234/20 and PRoW ref. HUD/234/50, all of which run along the northern boundary of the site.
- 1.16 To the west of the site, there is 18-hole private golf course; to the east is the existing urban area of Crosland Hill; to the south is an active quarry; and to the north is a steeply sloping cliff, which comprises woodland, scrub and public rights of way.

Methodology

- 1.17 This assessment has been carried out with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013 (referred to hereafter as "the Guidelines").
- 1.18 This assessment considers effects on landscape and views as separate issues. Landscape effects relate both to physical changes to landscape elements, for example, landform, watercourses, footpaths, trees, hedgerows and other

types of vegetation, and to the resulting landscape character. Visual effects relate to changes in people's views.

1.19 The Guidelines note that:

'The [EU] Directive [covering EIA] is clear that the emphasis is on the identification of likely significant environmental effects. (para. 1.17, page, 9)

1.20 The Guidelines also note in relation to Scope, at paragraph 6.2, page 98, that:

'...The emphasis must be on a reasonable approach which is proportional to the scale and nature of the proposed development...'

1.21 A formal scoping process was carried out for this proposal, however reference and the following were considered:

- landscape elements;
- landscape character;
- views experienced from publicly accessible viewpoints; and
- cumulative effects.

1.22 The assessment included both a desk-based analysis and on-site field study and observation. The desk study involved the collation and review of existing maps and written information about the site and the wider landscape beyond. This information provided the basis for an appraisal of the pattern and character of the site and its surroundings. It served to identify relevant planning policy and special designated areas, and highlighted potential receptors of landscape and visual impact.

1.23 The visual assessment for the development was carried out through a mix of desktop analysis and on site observation. An initial desk study of the area, with reference to topographic data and aerial photographs, was used to determine the theoretical zones of visual influence (TZVI), i.e. areas of land that are visually connected to the site. The principal views of the site were determined in the field, with particular emphasis on checking potential visual receptor areas such as public footpaths, principal vehicular routes and residential areas.

1.24 Representative viewpoints were identified which were considered to be of particular significance in terms of providing a range of views of the site (with topographical, positional and character variation) and where development would have the potential to affect their character and quality.

1.25 Photographs of each of the principal viewpoints were taken by a professional photographer using a fixed lens camera. The camera lens had a focal length equivalent to 50mm, i.e. similar to that seen with the naked eye. Where

panoramic views were taken, the individual frames were stitched together in accordance with the Guidelines. 12 views were taken on 25th October 2017, with 16 views taken on the 28th November 2017 and 6 views taken on the 29th November 2017; therefore, the majority of views are taken without leaf, providing a reasonable representation of the worst-case scenario.

- 1.26 To create the photomontages, a digital block model of the proposed development was produced. Using 3-D modelling software, perspective views of the model are created and can be placed accurately within the photographs.

Assumptions/ limitations

- 1.27 The production of this report has relied on three key assumptions to provide an assessment of the potential effect of development proposals. These are detailed below:

- The assessment models the illustrative masterplan as a rational interpretation of the parameter plans to limit the determination of unrealistic significance of effect. As such, the assessment has assumed a medium level of confidence;
- Due to the long distance nature of several of the visual receptors assessed (20 receptors lie 1km or further from the site), the variation in impact between a 2 and 3 storey house is assumed negligible.
- The assessment is split to describe impact across three durations. Construction of development proposals is assumed solely within the short-term period (0-2 years). The medium-term duration period is considered as operational, without the mitigation provided by landscape features other than retained elements. The long-term impact, considered over 15 years, assumes all elements of Parameter Plan 04 – Green Infrastructure have been implemented and have matured.
- An assessment of change in the landscape within the zone of visual influence since 2018 was considered. This revealed that the only change related to the construction of a housing scheme in Cowlersley, which has been under construction in June 2017. Given that this scheme was already under construction at the time of the previous assessment in 2018, and given the substantial planting around the River Colne, this development was screened from views along the norther sloped of the valley, looking south. Further, a site visit assessment of the landscape had revealed little change in terms of tree planting. On this basis, we believe that the previous photographs in 2018 can be used with a high degree of confidence when assessing the baseline and impacts of the proposed development.

Assessment Criteria

1.28 A three-stage assessment process has been adopted for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, in accordance with the Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment guidelines. Firstly, the nature of receptors (sensitivity) has been assessed. Secondly the nature of effects (magnitude) likely to result from the proposed development has been assessed. Lastly, the significance of the identified effects on receptors has been assessed, as required by the Environmental Impact Assessment EU Directive and UK Regulations.

Sensitivity of Receptors

1.29 The sensitivity of receptors has been assessed by undertaking an appraisal of landscape value or the value of views, in relation to an assessment of each receptor's susceptibility to change of the type of development proposed.

Magnitude of Effects

1.30 The assessment of the magnitude of effects combines an assessment of the size or scale of effects likely to arise on landscape and views, with an assessment of the geographical extent over which those effects are likely to be experienced and their duration and potential reversibility.

Significance

1.31 The significance of likely landscape and visual effects has been judged by assessing the sensitivity of receptors in relation to the magnitude of effects, for example, a moderate to high magnitude of effect on a highly sensitive receptor is likely to be significant, whereas a similar effect on a receptor of lower sensitivity is less likely to be significant.

1.32 The methodology and criteria used to undertake the above assessments are set out below.

Baseline Landscape Assessment

Landscape Value

1.33 As part of the baseline description, the value of potentially affected landscape receptors has been assessed, including landscape character and the individual elements or features which contribute to landscape character. Landscapes may be valued at community, local, national level or above. Existing landscape designations have been taken as the starting point for this assessment, as shown on Table 4.1 below. However, the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be assessed and this is considered in Table 4.2.

1.34 Table 4.1 sets out the relative importance of generic landscape designations and descriptions, identifying those designations applicable to the study area in the third column:

Typical Designation	Description	Actual Designation for this Site	Importance (Value)
World Heritage Site	Unique sites, features or areas of international importance with settings of very high quality.	None.	International (High)
National Park, AONBs, curtilage of Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Ancient Woodland	Sites, features or areas of national importance with settings of high quality.	Several listed buildings within the adjacent urban area of Crosland Hill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosland Hall – Grade II* Listed; • Range of Farm Buildings at Crosland Hall – Grade II listed; • Crosland Hall Cottage – Grade II listed; • 41 and 43 Crosland Hill Road – Grade II listed; • 67 and 69 Crosland Hill Road – Grade II Listed; and • 100-104 Crosland Hill Road – Grade II Listed • Castle Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument 	National (High)

Typical Designation	Description	Actual Designation for this Site	Importance (Value)
Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value, long distance footpaths	Sites, features or areas of regional importance with intact character.	Milnsbridge - Conservation Area; 1 km north of the site. Other surrounding Conservation Areas to north.	Regional (High/Medium)
Areas of Local Landscape Importance, Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	Sites, features or areas of district importance.	Network of public rights of way surrounding the site	District (Medium/Low)
Probably no designation, eg. Public Open Space or local footpath	General countryside area valued at the local level.	Partial area of the site.	Local (Medium/ Low)

1.35 Whilst the assessment of value is partly based on the planning policy importance of the landscape, other criteria used to assess landscape value in more detail, including that of undesignated landscapes, are set out in Table 4.2, below:

Attribute	Criteria
Landscape Condition	Intactness of the landscape/condition of individual elements.
Scenic Quality	General appeal of the landscape to the senses.
Rarity	Rarity of landscape character areas, types or features.
Representativeness	Particular characteristic/feature/element considered a particularly important example.
Cultural Interest	The presence of wildlife or cultural heritage interest which contributes positively to the landscape.
Recreation Value	Evidence that the landscape experience forms an important part of recreational activity, eg. as established in guidebooks.
Wildness/Tranquillity	Evidence that a landscape is valued for its wildness/tranquillity.
Associations	Relevant associations with notable figures, such as writers or artists, or events in history that contribute to landscape value.

1.36 An overall assessment has been made for each receptor, based on an overview of the assessments made using each of the above criteria, in terms of high, medium and low value. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important cultural or historical associations, is likely to be highly valued. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or cultural interest is likely to be considered of only low landscape value.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

1.37 Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change has been assessed using the following criteria, with reference to the baseline conditions:

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Little ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue harm.
Medium	Some ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue harm.
Low	Substantial ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue harm.

Overall Sensitivity of Receptor

1.38 The assessment of receptor sensitivity combines judgements on the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed and the value attributed to that receptor.

Baseline Visual Assessment

1.39 In terms of assessing the baseline sensitivity, a key factor to consider is the type of view and the number of users. Following on from this, we have established the overall value of the view. The type of view and the number of viewers are described in the following terms:

- Glimpsed (i.e. in passing)/Filtered/Oblique/Framed/Open Views; and
- Few/Moderate/Many Viewers

Value of Views

1.40 Visual receptors generally comprise users of public rights of way or other outdoor recreational facilities; and also, vehicle travellers who may be visiting, or living or working within the study area and their views at particular places.

1.41 The value attached to views has regard to a number of factors, including:

- recognition through planning designations or heritage assets; and
- the popularity of the viewpoint, its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, on tourist maps and the facilities provided for its enjoyment.

1.42 The assessment of the value of views is summarised in Table 4.4 below, in terms of High, Medium and Low value. These criteria are provided for guidance only and are not intended to be absolute:

Table 4.4: Value Attached to Views	
Value	Criteria
High	Views from landscapes/viewpoints of national importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience, or with important cultural associations.
Medium	Views from landscapes/viewpoints of regional/district importance or moderately popular visitor attractions where the view forms part of the experience, or with local cultural associations.
Low	Views from landscapes/viewpoints with no designations, not particularly popular as a viewpoint and with minimal or no cultural associations.

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

1.43 The susceptibility of different types of people to changes in views is mainly a function of:

- the occupation or activity of the viewer at a given location; and
- the extent to which a person's attention or interest may therefore be focussed on a view and the visual amenity experienced at a given view.

1.44 The assessment of a visual receptor to change is specific to the proposed development. However the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment offers the following generic guidance as a starting point for the assessment.

Table 4.5: Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change	
Susceptibility	Type of Receptor
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents; • People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of public rights of way, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views; • Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; • Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents; and • Travellers on scenic routes.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is moderately important to the quality of the journey.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve appreciation of views; • People at their place of work, where the setting is not important to the quality of working life; and • Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is fleeting and incidental to the journey.

1.45 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment qualifies the above examples as follows:

'This division is not black and white and in reality there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change. Each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focussed on views and visual amenity.' (page 114, paragraph 6.35).

Overall Sensitivity

1.46 The assessment of receptor sensitivity combines judgements on the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed and the value attributed to that receptor.

Magnitude of Effects

1.47 The magnitude of a landscape or visual effect is assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced by that effect, and its duration and degree of reversibility.

Size and Scale of Effects

1.48 The size and/or scale of effects relates to the scale of changes in the landscape, such as the loss or addition of features and the scale of the change in views.

Geographical Extent of Effects

1.49 The geographical extent of effects relates to:

- the area over which landscape effects are likely to be experienced, ie. this could be at the site level, the immediate setting of the site, or landscape character type or area; and
- the area over which visual effects are likely to be visible.

Duration

1.50 The following terminology is used to describe the duration of the proposals:

- short-term: under 2 years (the construction period)
- medium-term: 2-15 years (on completion without full benefit of mitigation)
- long-term: over 15 years (after completion, after the growth of mitigation planting)

1.51 Effects may be temporary, permanent or reversible over time. For example, visual effects arising from construction activities may be limited solely to the construction period and therefore only temporary or they may be permanent, for example, where construction necessitates some clearance of existing vegetation.

Reversibility

1.52 Effects may be reversible, for example, restoration of a quarry following mineral extraction. The assessment therefore considers the practicality of effects being reversed with an approximate timeframe for reversibility.

Nature of Effects

1.53 The nature of effects may be positive or negative (beneficial or adverse) direct or indirect. Direct effects are those which result directly from a development itself, whereas indirect or secondary effects may arise as a consequential change resulting from development, for example, changes to downstream vegetation as a result of alterations to a drainage regime.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

1.54 The size and/or scale of change in the landscape takes into consideration the following factors:

- the extent/proportion of landscape elements lost or added;
- the contribution of that element to landscape character and the degree to which aesthetic/perceptual aspects are altered; and

- whether the effect is likely to change the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.

1.55 The criteria used to assess the size and scale of landscape effects are based upon the amount of change that will occur as a result of the proposals, as described in Table 4.6, below:

Table 4.6: Landscape Effects: Magnitude	
Category	Criteria
Major adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a total change in the key characteristics of landscape character; will introduce elements totally uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape; and/or will result in a substantial or total loss, alteration or addition of key elements/features/characteristics.
Moderate adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a partial change in the key characteristics of landscape character; will introduce elements partially uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape; and/or will result in partial loss, alteration or addition of key elements/features/characteristics.
Slight adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a small change in the key characteristics of landscape character; will introduce elements that are not uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape; and/or will result in a minor loss, alteration or addition of elements/features/characteristics.
Negligible adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a just discernible change to landscape character/elements/features/characteristics.
No change	The proposals will not cause any change to the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics.
Negligible landscape benefit	The proposals will result in a just discernible improvement to the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics.
Slight landscape benefit	The proposals will achieve a degree of fit with the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics and go some way towards improving the condition or character of the landscape.
Moderate landscape benefit	The proposals will achieve a good fit with the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics, or would noticeably improve the condition or character of the landscape.
Major landscape benefit	The proposals will totally accord with the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics, or would restore, recreate or permanently benefit the condition or character of the landscape.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

1.56 The magnitude of a visual effect is assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and degree of reversibility.

1.57 The size or scale of change in the view relates to the degree of contrast or integration likely to result from the proposed development and is influenced by the relative time over which a view is experienced and whether it is a full, partial or glimpsed view.

1.58 The following criteria are used to assess the size and scale of visual effects, based on the degree of change to the view or composition:

Category	Criteria
Major adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting from the loss or addition of substantial features in the view and will substantially alter the appreciation of the view.
Moderate adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which would have some effect on the composition, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the appreciation of the view.
Slight adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a perceptible change or contrast to the view, but which would not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
Negligible adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view, which would not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
No change	The proposals will cause no change to the view.
Neutral	There will be a change to the composition of the view, but the change will be in keeping with the existing elements of the view.

Significance of Effects

1.59 The scale shown in Table 4.8, below, is used to guide the assessment of the significance of both landscape and visual effects, from a combination of the assessment of receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effects:

Sensitivity of Receptor	Major Effect	Moderate Effect	Slight Effect	Negligible Effect	Neutral Effect
High	Significant	Significant/ Moderately Significant	Moderately Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Medium	Moderately Significant	Moderately Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Low	Moderately Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

- 1.60 The table has regard to guidance in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013, at paragraph 5.56, page 92 (significance of landscape effects) and paragraph 6.44, page 116 (significance of visual effects). This matrix is used as a guide to determine significance, along with professional judgement.
- 1.61 For the purposes of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Moderately Significant effects are not considered to be Significant in the meaning of the Regulations.

Confidence

- 1.62 The predicted impact is assessed against the criteria set out below in order to attribute a level of confidence to the visual assessment:
- High - The predicted impact is either certain, or very likely to occur, based on reliable information or previous experience.
 - Medium – The predicted impact and its level are best estimates, based on on-site and desktop study.
 - Low – The predicted impact and its level are best estimates, based on given knowledge and experience. More information may be needed to improve the level of confidence.

2. Planning Context

Planning

- 2.1 The site falls within the administrative borough of Kirklees Borough Council. This section includes a review of planning policies relevant to landscape and visual issues at a national and local level. The wider planning policy context is set out within the separate Planning Statement, which has been prepared by Gerald Eve LLP.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was issued in February 2019 and outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied.
- 2.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive way:
- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 2.4 For plan making, this means that local planning authorities “*should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change*”.
- 2.5 At paragraph 117, the NPPF states “*Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.*”
- 2.6 Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account: the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

2.7 For decision making, development that accords with a current development plan should be approved without delay; and, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole; or
- Specific policies as set out within the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

2.8 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF relates to delivering high quality design. It states that local planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *“will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.”*
- *“are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping.”*
- *“establish a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.”*
- “optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.”
- *“are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation (such as increased densities);*
- “establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.”
- “optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.”
- “create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

2.9 Paragraph 69 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve places that promote:

- *“Opportunities for meeting between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use development, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;*
- *Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion; and*

- *Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces which encourage the active and continued use of public areas”.*

2.10 The site is the process of being removed from the Green Belt within the emerging Draft Local Plan.

Local Planning Policy

Adopted Local Plan

2.11 Policy LP32 Landscape states that: proposals should be designed to take into account and seek to enhance the landscape character of the area considering in particular:

- a. the need to protect the setting and special qualities of the Peak District National park, views in and out of the park and views from surrounding viewpoints;
- b. the setting of settlements and buildings within the landscape;
- c. the patterns of woodland, trees and field boundaries;
- d. the appearance of rivers, canals, reservoirs and other water features within the landscape.

2.12 Other relevant policies include:

- Policy LP 2 Place shaping: All development proposals should seek to build on the strengths, opportunities and help address challenges identified in the local plan, in order to protect and enhance the qualities which contribute to the character of these places;
- Policy LP 5 Masterplans: high standards of design that respect the character of the landscape, heritage, adjacent and nearby settlements and built development, reflecting the urban to rural transition with appropriate boundary treatment;
- make effective use of the site through the application of appropriate densities in terms of scale, height and massing, and its relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape;
- create a strong sense of place, ensuring the proposed development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

2.13 There is a footpath network which crosses the site within the Valley Crest landscape area and a number of public rights of way are present within the vicinity of the site.

3.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

National Landscape Character

3.1 The Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe National Character Area (NCA) is a transitional landscape from the upland areas of the Southern Pennines NCA in the west through to the low-lying land of the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield NCA to the east.

3.2 The area is characterised by:

- A transitional landscape dissected by steep-sided valleys, dropping from the high gritstone hills in the west to lower land in the east, and thus creating an important backdrop to the many industrial towns and villages within and beyond the NCA.
- Sandstones and gritstone beds of Millstone Grit (Namurian) age underlying smooth hills and plateaux in the west. These are overlain in the east by beds of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone of Coal Measures age.
- Rivers creating a deeply dissected landscape, with high plateaux cut by steep-sided valleys, and fanning out in 'fingers' across valleys of the NCA.
- Treeless hill tops with tracts of rough grazing and extensive areas of enclosed pasture to the west, but with broadleaved woodland on steeper valley sides, giving the impression of a well-wooded landscape, especially to the north and west of Sheffield.
- Predominantly pastoral farming, especially in western areas, with a shift to more arable land in the drier eastern areas.
- Boundary features that change from distinctive patterns of drystone walls on the upland hills, to hedgerows becoming the predominant field boundary in the east.
- Close conjunction between rural landscapes and the rich industrial heritage of the urban areas, including settlements associated with the textile industry, with large mills and tall chimneys, and large factories and forges associated with the iron, steel and manufacturing industries.
- Urban development constrained within valley floors and up side slopes, with location and layout strongly influenced by the landform.
- Industrial wealth revealed in magnificent civil architecture in town centres, notably Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Sheffield, and several stately homes with designed parklands.
- Evidence of bronze-age and Roman habitation still present on uplands, and old pack-horse routes that once joined settlements across the Pennines still in place, or now forming modern major road routes.
- Extensive and dramatic views from higher land out over lower-lying land to the east, even from within urban areas.
- Several reservoirs contained within narrow valleys contributing a distinct character as well as providing popular places to visit.
- Small patches of fragmented priority habitats providing important refuges locally for wildlife. Grassland mosaics are particularly important in supporting waders and the twite that breeds on adjacent moorland areas;

lowland woodland is also an important feature.

- In places a dense network of roads and urban development, with many road, rail and canal routes crossing the NCA, and a high density of footpaths throughout.

3.3 For the purpose of assessing the effects of development these character areas are of limited significance as the classification covers such a wide area. There would be no perceptible effects upon the wider character area or any particular features of merit described within the study.

Regional Landscape Character

3.4 The Kirklees District Landscape Character Assessment, undertaken in July 2015, identified 19 separate Landscape Character Types across the district, of which the site is identified as being within the Type LCA E1: Homefirth - Meltham. (**Appendix 1**).

3.5 This section of the report considers the characteristics and features set out within the Kirklees Landscape Character Assessment.

3.6 In order to establish the degree of change arising from the development of the site in relation to the Homefirth – Meltham character area and the extent to which that change will affect those character receptors identified within the character area description, it is important to understand the existing baseline context and characteristics as set out within the baseline descriptions.

3.7 The broad characteristics and context associated with the character area can be summarised as:

Topography, geology and drainage

- Gently undulating plateaux often sloping up to the higher moorlands nearby, ranging from between 150 and 300 metres altitude.
- Landscape underlain by Carboniferous Millstone Grit and sandstone.
- Some slopes deeply incised by valleys, through which small tributaries and springs flow to join the Holme River below.

Woodland cover

- mixed semi-natural woodland, scattered trees.

Land use and field patterns

- Small to medium-scale regular pattern of grassland pastures enclosed by dry stone walls or hedgerows.
- Majority of the fields are improved pastures or managed for silage production.

Semi-natural habitats

- Amenity grassland, semi-improved grassland, improved grassland, tall ruderal, mixed
- Semi-natural woodland, scattered trees (site ecological importance), dwarf shrub heath and semi Natural broadleaved woodland (local ecological importance).

Archaeology and cultural heritage

- A strong historic sense of place with traditional Millstone Grit farmhouses and cottages combining with stone wall field boundaries to create a unified local vernacular.
- A large concentration of Listed Buildings associated with the area's small settlements, many of which include Conservation Areas.
- Disused quarries provide evidence of industrial heritage.

Settlement and road pattern

- Distinctive settlement character of scattered farms, individual rural houses and groups of dwellings clustered into hamlets and small villages.
- A number of larger settlements also exist (including Scholes, Nethererton Moor, Honley and Netherthong).
- Dense network of minor roads and narrow winding lanes linking to nearby urban centres mainly focused to the east.

Views and perceptual qualities

- Proximity of the urban centres exerts an influence on landscape character with urban fringe land uses evident in many areas.
- The elevated nature of the landscape affords long views across the valley settlements and beyond, including into Barnsley and Calderdale districts.
- A strongly rural landscape with pockets of relative tranquillity away from the main settlements. This is enhanced in the west due to the proximity and intervisibility with the Peak District National Park.

- 3.8 It is considered that this landscape character area is of medium landscape value within the study area and medium susceptibility to change, resulting in an overall medium sensitivity receptor.

Local Landscape Character

Local Landscape Character Assessment (2015)

- 3.9 The Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2015, provides a useful baseline document in relation to the site. The document identifies that within the Local Character Profile area LCA E1: Holmfirth – Meltham and is bounded to the northern edge by LCA F4 Colne [Slaithwaite, Marsden] and is in the National Character Area Profile No. 37 - Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe.

The document then goes on to divide the site into following landscape types:

1. Traditional farming [grazing, silage and hay making] – which is principally pastoral plateau farmland - mixed agricultural fields, hay and grazing land with occasional groups of broadleaf trees with isolated small trees occasionally on field boundaries. There are tree preservation orders on individual trees, primarily sycamore, within the site, located close to the south and south western boundaries.

The elevated nature of the landscape affords long views across the valley to the north, settlements to the east and beyond, including to the south towards Holmfirth and beyond. There are also traditional farm buildings and associated barns. The area is accessed for farming, along access tracks and through field gates. There are 2 Public Rights of Way footpaths [numbers HUD/234/40 and HUD/234/50] which about the site along the northern boundary [outside the site].

In terms of the landscape condition, the area is managed grassland, some in-bye fields used for grazing and others for hay or silage mainly. The condition is good with field boundaries defined by well maintained drystone walls.

The Council's landscape character assessment then goes on to conclude that the local landscape character area is of moderate landscape character and in good condition. There is a case for conserving and strengthening the character of the area and any development should be sympathetic and improve permeability across the site.

2. Industrial [fireworks factory] - The key characteristics are an industrial firework factory compound, access roads grass and scrub, with occasional groups of trees and scrub between shed with areas of rough grassland with areas of naturalised vegetation and rose bay willow herb. There appears to be little landscape maintenance to the storage area and outer lying sheds.

There is a very mixed tree and scrub cover across the site with shelterbelts, field boundary trees and extensive belts of native planting to screen the fireworks compound area.

The elevated nature of the landscape affords long views across the valley to the north, settlements to the east, including to the south towards Holmfirth and beyond however these are intermittent glimpses due to the nature of the screening vegetation bounding the compound.

The area is low quality grass and scrub with an eclectic mixture of office buildings, sheds and storage containers linked by numerous access roads and parking/storage bays.

The buildings themselves are a mixture of different coloured brick buildings, garages, pre-fabricated and steel buildings form the head office with a range of steel and concrete storage sheds and metal containers across the compound area.

The area feels separated from the surrounding landscape due to the screening trees and vegetation which surrounds the boundary security fence. The report goes on to conclude that this local landscape character area is of weak landscape character and in poor condition, mainly due to the unkempt appearance. There is a case for development which could link more closely with the surrounding character of the area, drawing on the quality of the landscape and any such development should be sympathetic to this.

3. Managed recreational land and small scale agricultural fields - whilst we agree with the Council's description of character area 1, Traditional Farming; and 2 The Industrial Firework site, we do consider that there is an additional character area in between the Firework site and the village of Crosland Hill. Character Area 3 is essentially a mix of managed recreational land associated with the Fireworks Factory and small-scale agricultural fields used for with grazing, which are bounded by dry stone walls. The urban influences of the adjacent suburban housing development, and the developed edge of the village add to the enclosed nature of this character area and contribute to the area having a more urban edge and semi rural character. The condition of the landscape is relatively good and the boundary walls are well maintained. It is our view that the landscape sensitivity is a moderate to low.

4. - Character Area 4, to the north of the Firework Factory, which will remain within the Green Belt, is also a distinct landscape character area. This area is characterized by sloping and undulating land around the upper slopes and crest of Crosland Hill. The area has a number of footpaths running east/west and is currently used as open grazing. There are also areas of exposed bed-rock and a former quarry. The landscape elements are in a good condition with well maintained walls and an area of acid grassland, which has ecological value. The area is highly visible from the from areas within the valley floor and within high ground along the opposite side of the valley. The presence of the former quarry areas whilst providing physical scars on the landscape do provide historical examples of the economic activities of the past and are therefore of some landscape value. Overall, our view is that this landscape character area contains characteristics of the wider national character area 37: Yorkshire Southern Pennines, which are namely treeless hill tops with tracts of rough grazing. Our view is that this landscape character area is of a higher sensitivity, although medium overall.

Townscape Character

3.10 **Figure 4 (Appendix 1)** provides an illustration of the townscape character areas referred to within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies this application. Whilst there a number of residential areas within Huddersfield

comprising largely suburban characteristics, the semi-rural and village characteristics within the edges of the valley, have been used as design cues to inform the detailed townscape principles within the development proposals. Particular qualities are provided within section x of the Design and Access Statement.

Landscape Resources

Tree Survey

- 3.11 The site's existing tree cover includes mature tree lines established along the southern and eastern application site boundaries, with internal tree cover comprising predominantly low quality regenerative shrubs and small stature trees, with pockets of more established moderate quality tree groups that offer cohesive screening merit in the context of the existing fireworks site.
- 3.12 The change of use of the site to residential development requires a new arrangement of built-form and associated green infrastructure, resulting in a number of existing buffer / screening planting groups requiring removal due to their unsuitability within a new residential scheme and the impact on the aspirations for new green infrastructure. A high number of trees is therefore expected to be removed, however this is predominantly limited to low quality regenerative trees that have become established following absent tree and vegetation management across the site.

Land Use & Site Context

- 3.13 The appraisal of existing land use is another useful tool for determining how the landscape has changed. It does not involve the application of sensitivity or value, but does assist in exploring the suitability and ability of the landscape to absorb further change, restoration and enhancement in relation to such matters as condition, scale, relationship with other uses and spatial arrangement.

SECTION 4: RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Visual Amenity

Key Views of the Site

- 4.1 The View Plan, Figure 2.1, shows the theoretical extent to which the ground level of the site is visible from the surrounding landscape.
- 4.2 Existing views towards the site are not generally possible at distance from the south or east due to the natural topography and intervening hedgerows. Views from the footpath network to the north of the site provide short distance views. Views from the north are available, from the urban areas at the lower points of the valley, particularly from the north east. As the land rises northwards there are views from a number of elevated locations around the villages and rural footpaths, many of the villages containing conservation areas.
- 4.3 Figure 2.1 shows the location of typical publicly accessible viewpoints of the site from the surrounding landscape. Each one of these viewpoints has been considered as a receptor in the Visual Assessment. Annotated panoramic photographs are included at Appendix 2, with the baseline view for each described in Appendix 3, in addition to the sensitivity of each viewpoint receptor. In summary:
- *Viewpoints 1 – 8* are from the perimeter of the site, including the adjacent roads and public rights of way;
 - *Viewpoints 9 and 13* are from the village at Crosland Hill Road, including the setting of a number of listed buildings;
 - *Viewpoints 14-21* are views from the urban/rural areas occupying the lower valley slopes to the north and include public rights of way and road views – and also include a number of conservation area views;
 - *Viewpoints 22-31* are views from the predominantly rural areas occupying the higher valley slopes to the north and include public rights of way and road views –and also include a number of conservation area views;

- *Viewpoints 32-35* are views from the different levels from the southeast but include the SAM at Castle Hill - include public rights of way and road views.

Cumulative Sites

- 4.4 In accordance with the methodology of this assessment, the impacts of the site in isolation are considered, in addition to a cumulative assessment which assumes the proposed and committed sites are also built; this ensure a worst case assessment has been undertaken.

Key Impacts and Likely Significant Effects – Construction and Operation

- 4.5 Potential landscape impacts relate to individual landscape elements, landscape character and the characteristics of the surrounding townscape. The predicted landscape impacts can be divided into temporary impacts, i.e. those which will occur during the construction phase, and permanent impacts, which will be ongoing throughout the operational phase of the proposals.

Landscape Strategy/Landscape Proposals

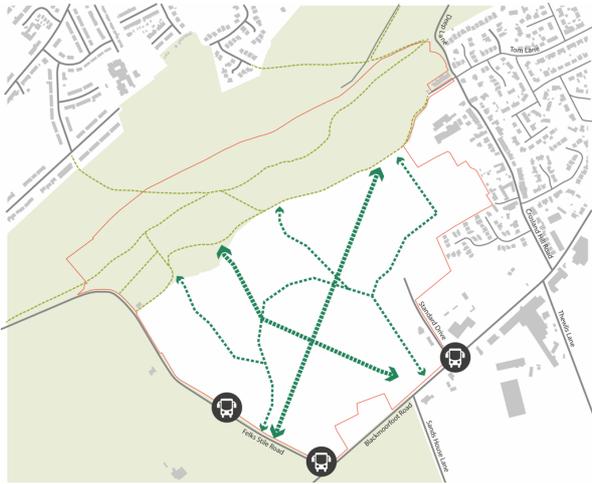
- 4.6 The proposals have developed in tandem with the LVIA process, which has been used to test, challenge and develop the masterplan. On this basis the proposals have emerged around a robust landscape and townscape strategy, the details of which are defined below. The mitigation for the development is described in within this section and point 4.5 and is integral to the design of the scheme at all stages and can therefore be considered as inherent mitigation.
- 4.7 The inherent mitigation as part of the masterplan will not compensate for the losses of habitats proposed and further compensation will be required. Further compensation will be required, and it is recommended that:
- The woodland habitat within the north west POS area will be retained;
 - Opportunities exist to recreate areas of woodland and heath lost to the development within the ownership boundary to at least their original size to compensate for the loss of these habitats;
 - There is potential to establish new areas of priority habitats such as woodland, scrub and heath in the ownership boundary to enhance the functionality of the habitat network;
 - The grassland habitats within the ownership boundary could be managed to maximise species richness, increase their ecological importance and contribute to the functionality of the habitat network;

- A network of formal footpaths should be created within the site and ownership boundary to guide recreational use around and away from the habitats of greatest importance and not run directly through them; and
- The potential of planting of native tree and species-rich hedgerows on the site within the POS and around the boundaries would create linear habitat corridors through the site;
- Where possible, native species or those with known wildlife benefit will also be used within more formal landscaped areas to also maximise the importance of areas of built development to wildlife; and
- A LEMP will be required to ensure that the retained, proposed and enhanced areas of habitat within the site are managed appropriately to maximise their benefit to biodiversity and offset increased levels of disturbance from the public once the site is operational.

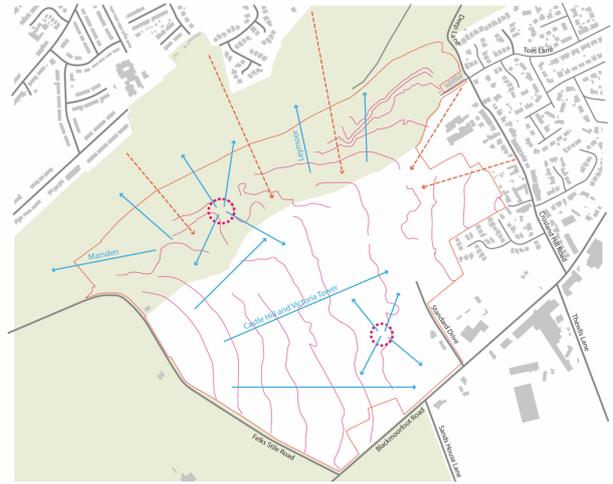
4.8 The intention is to enhance the urban edge of Huddersfield, responding to the local townscape, landscape, topography and views, by creating a positive transition between the urban edge and open countryside. There are few examples of such a relationship being achieved within recent developments within Huddersfield, and hence examples further afield in the wider rural context have been investigated to inform the proposals.

4.9 The masterplan proposes a new high quality sustainable residential neighbourhood, sensitively designed to meet local demand and affordable requirements. The development will be of the highest design quality, based around the creation of a village character; informed by a considered townscape analysis of areas of local heritage value. This will ensure a sense of place, and local distinctiveness is achieved through out the development.

4.10 The townscape analysis of the local context indicates that sensitive built development is characterized by strong rural characteristics such as village streets and agricultural farmsteads linked via country lanes. However, these characteristics also vary in relation to topography, becoming looser and more fragmented along the upper levels of slopes. On this basis, the following principles/design concepts have developed:



Principle 7 Improve connectivity of the area and encourage sustainable movement



Principle 8 Be mindful of views out of the site



Principle 6 Work with the existing topography & create sustainable drainage



Principle 5 Create a network of green spaces which enhance the existing landscape



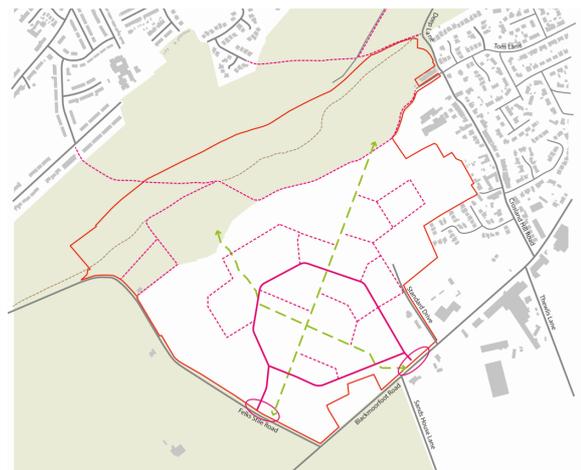
Principle 4 Develop character and density which responds to the particular conditions of the site



Principle 3 Sensitive response to differing edge conditions



Principle 2 Work with the existing site features & the 'memory' of the site



Principle 1 Create a successful network of streets

Construction Impacts: Site in isolation and Cumulative Impact

4.11 The development is at a relatively early stage in the design and construction programme given the outline nature of the proposals and, as such, it is difficult to predict with much certainty the precise methodology that will be adopted for construction and site management. However, it is possible to identify some broad impacts that may arise during the construction phase. These impacts are considered to be:

- the visual impact of HGV movements carrying out enabling works on the site, implementing landscape proposals and implementing masterplan proposals;
- the visual impact of site lighting around construction areas;
- the visual and landscape impact of remodelling ground levels;
- landscape impacts of incorporating service and utilities;
- visual impact of temporary screening measures and protective fencing;
- landscape and visual impacts of temporary parking, on-site accommodation and work areas; landscape and visual impact of material stockpiles.

4.12 The above impacts are considered to be over the medium term, particularly when considered cumulatively. The impacts on both the landscape resources as well as the visual impacts are considered with the assessment Tables within Appendix 4 and 6. The construction impacts on landscape resources are the same for all periods, and vary between slight and moderate.

4.13 The assessment Table provided within Appendix 6 indicates that the construction impacts on landscape resources. The main construction impacts relate to the impact on landform of remodelling ground levels/cut and fill operations, which would be moderately significant when considered cumulatively. There is also considered to be a moderately significant construction impacts on the farmsteads, in terms of the physical construction activities, when considered cumulatively.

4.14 The assessment set out in Appendix 4 finds that there will be adverse visual effects arising from construction activity when seen from the following viewpoints:

- Views from the PROW around the northern edge of the site, due to the proximity of the viewpoint to the site, such as Viewpoints 3-7;
- View 15 from Milsbridge Conservation Area along the northern edge of the site only ;
- SAM at Castle Hill, viewpoint 32 due to the sensitivity of the viewpoint and openness of the view - in isolation and cumulatively.

Operational Impacts: Site in Isolation and Cumulative Impacts

4.15 The impact on each receptor identified in the baseline studies has been assessed and is set out in the Assessment Tables within Appendices 4.4 and 4.5, with a summary of the assessment set out below.

Landscape Character

4.16 The sensitivity of landscape character areas are identified as medium overall. Although at the local level the existing fireworks factory is considered of low sensitivity. Given the wide expansive nature of the character areas within and around the site, the impact in isolation as well as cumulatively is not considered to be significant. Moreover, the proposals in isolation and taken cumulatively, would result in limited removal of trees required to accommodate road infrastructure. Further, the creation of additional woodland, hedgerow and tree planting within and surrounding the proposed development would help ensure that overall impacts are not significant on any identified landscape character area.

4.17 Even within the agricultural fields character area, which encompasses the western section of the site and its immediate surroundings, whilst the proposals will remove some of the open fields to the west of the site, such a change is moderate within the context of the extent of the wider expanse of fields retained.

Landscape Features

- 4.18 The sensitivity of landform is identified as medium. Although the existing landform falls dramatically across the site, the masterplan seeks to work with and emphasise these changes in level.
- 4.19 The sensitivity of landscape features such as trees, hedgerows and walls is identified as medium. Within the proposed development, small sections of the trees and boundaries would be removed to accommodate road and footpath infrastructure. New woodland, trees, hedgerows and walls would be planted within and around the proposed development to ensure there is no significant impact. The number of hedgerow sections removed would obviously increase cumulatively; however, within the context of the number of hedgerows retained and those proposed as part of the schemes, such changes would not be perceived in the wider context.
- 4.20 A public right of way crosses the site within the Valley Crest landscape area and a number of public rights of way are present within the vicinity of the site as previously discussed. The proposals would be to enhance the footpath network, including surfacing and wayfinding, providing significant benefits and improved connectivity and access to the countryside.
- 4.21 Visual impacts on key viewpoints identified along the public footpath through the site are considered separately within this report. This section considers the impact on the existing network of public footpaths and cycleways within and around the site only, in terms of connectivity and sustainable patterns of travel. On the basis of the improvements suggested in section 4.5, the overall impact is therefore predicted to be moderately beneficial.
- 4.22 Whilst the overall field pattern will be lost, a green buffer has been retained between the edge of the development and Felks Stile Rd, as well as a retained Linear Park through the site. Moreover, the use of rural design principles and more organic edge would help to create a more sympathetic relationship between the proposed development and the rural setting. On this basis, the change is not substantially uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
- 4.23 Two new access points from Blackmoorfoot Road and Felks Stile Road requires the loss of moderate value trees where the access points traverse existing tree groups and where Blackmoorfoot Road is to be widening into an area of tree cover. The scheme will however retain and seek to enhance the principal tree lines located

along Blackmoorfoot Road and Felks Stile Road through sufficient development offsets and new tree planting opportunities.

- 4.24 The scheme demonstrates opportunities for replacement and additional tree planting throughout the site. This includes principal linear parks that seek to connect more informally sited 'park pockets' and open spaces across the site's boundaries. The arrangement of new open space will serve to reinforce the site boundaries, provide a high-quality treescape throughout the new developed areas and is expected to enhance the overall long-term amenity potential of the site's tree cover.
- 4.25 The outline proposals are therefore supported from an arboricultural perspective and are considered to respect local planning policy aspirations applicable to arboricultural matters. This conclusion is subject to the provision of replacement tree cover, further assessment work as part of detailed design proposals and the adoption of future tree protection measures by way of an Arboricultural Method Statement.

Visual Amenity

- 4.26 Full details of the visual effects are set out in Appendix 4.5, however the following provides a summary of the significant effects, together with the reasons for those effects.

Visual Effects, On Completion

- 4.27 On completion, the buildings, roads, car parking, retention basins and planting will all be complete, albeit the planting will not yet be effective in visual terms. Visual effects will remain as stated during construction. The assessment within Appendix 4.5 finds that there will be moderately adverse visual effects arising on completion when seen from the following viewpoints:

- Blackmoorfoot Rd - users of footpath, due to the proximity of the viewpoint to the site (views 3-7);
- View 32 from Castle Hill, due to the sensitivity of the view point.

Visual Effects 15 Years After Completion

- 4.28 Residual visual effect are those remaining 15 years after completion, when proposed planting will have had the benefit of over 15 years establishment and will be between 7.5m and 10m in height, depending on the species and their initial planting height.
- 4.29 Full details of visual effects 15 years after completion are set out in Appendix 4.5. Photomontages/wirelines are included at Appendix 2.
- 4.30 The assessment finds that there will be no significant adverse visual effects remaining, 15 years after planting.

Night-time Visual Effects

- 4.31 Views at night are affected by existing light sources within Crosland Hill, particularly when viewed from the north of the site. The approach along the northern landscape edge will extend lighting along the crest of the valley, however, over time, as a result of landscape mitigation, the visual effects will reduce. Accordingly, there are no predicted significant night-time effects in the long-term.

Mitigation, Enhancement and Residual Effects

Construction

- 4.32 Through the adoption of a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) good site management shall be achieved through the following measures:
- Protection of existing vegetation to be retained where practicable;
 - Strict adherence to the self storage areas and construction access roads;
 - Use of site hoarding where appropriate; and
 - A phased planting programme.
- 4.33 The implementation of good site management, maintenance and housekeeping would ensure that temporary deterioration to landscape resources, character and visual amenity will be kept to a practicable minimum. Despite these better practice measures, there would still remain inevitable adverse effects during construction works. However in overall terms the residual effects upon landscape resources, landscape character and the visual envelope are not anticipated to be significant and the majority of which short term, temporary and local.

Operational

- 4.44 Landscape mitigation is conveyed on Figure 2.0, Landscape Masterplan. As previously discussed, the landscape mitigation proposals are predominantly inherent to the evolution of the scheme and have therefore been considered in the above assessment. They are designed to minimise landscape and visual impacts,

integrate the proposed development into the landscape and to provide as many benefits as possible to the wider landscape. The proposals include the following inherent mitigation:

- retention of most existing trees and hedgerows, together with a programme of enhancement and tree planting;
 - replacement of Grade R trees and hedgerows marked for removal;
 - creation of a strong new woodland structure and green canopy using locally indigenous species the purpose of which is to integrate the proposed development within the surrounding countryside, reflect the character of the adjacent woodland surrounding the disused factory and reduce the development's visual impact on local views;
 - new woodland, tree and hedgerow planting adjacent to boundary hedgerows, including the central hedgerow, designed to provide a strong landscape framework and setting for the new development;
 - new tree and hedgerow planting along the frontage of Campden Road to create a green gateway into Shipston on Stour and reduce the visibility of proposed development;
 - new retention basins with new planting, to make them focal features within the development; and
 - enhancement and creation of additional footpaths within green avenues surrounding the development.
- In addition to the integral mitigation however, secondary mitigation measures as part of the on-going detailed design process should include the following:
- The design of buildings within each development should be of high quality which responds to the environment in terms of aesthetic character, including materials, colour, articulation and fenestration and building heights and densities;

- Introduction of an appropriate lighting scheme for each site which adheres to best practice guidance;
- Adoption of a landscape management plan, complete with a series of aims and objectives that seek to improve the quality of the landscape in terms of its development (both visually and physically), its content (wildlife and habitat creation) and its diversity (opportunities for creation of additional landscape elements, such as ditches, water bodies, or new woodlands).
- Given the comprehensive nature of the landscape strategy and design evolution of the proposals, all residual effects would remain as identified in the “15 years after completion” assessment set out in Appendix 4.5.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 In conclusion, this assessment finds that the proposed development will have only moderately significant effects on the open fields to the west of the site and no other significant adverse effects on landscape character or resources.
- 5.2 In terms of visual effects, whilst the views around the northern footpath the assessment finds that there will be moderately significant effects during construction and completion, no significant adverse visual effects remaining, 15 years after planting.